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Cleaning up Lake Michigan and helping relieve traffic congestion on Lake County roads were two topics on the minds of area mayors as they met with U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park, Monday at the Deerfield library.

Mayors and village officials from 13 communities including Bannockburn, Buffalo Grove, Deerfield, Green Oaks, Libertyville, Lincolnshire, Long Grove, North Chicago, Palatine, Riverwoods, Wheeling, Wilmette and Winnetka attended the mayors summit.

Kirk outlined several environmental initiatives including support for more stringent regulations to prevent dumping of sewage into Lake Michigan.

Kirk said Milwaukee currently allows the dumping of partially treated sewage into Lake Michigan, which he believes could be linked to beach closings that occurred along the North Shore last year. He supports pending legislation called The Save Our Waters from Sewage Act that would ban partially-treated human sewage from being dumped into the nation's waterways.

"We have had beach closings. Obviously, we're concerned about the dumping (of sewage) into the lake," he said.

Responding to a question from Buffalo Grove Village President Elliot Hartstein about federal funding for roads in the wake of the county's failed 1/2 cent sales tax for roads referendum, Kirk outlined some of the federal projects in the works.

Kirk said the proposed federal transportation bill includes \$9 million for reconstruction of the Illinois Route 60 bridge over the Tri-State Tollway near Lake Forest, more than \$1 million for interchange improvements at U.S. Route 41 and Illinois Route 176 in Lake Bluff, and additional funding to expand rail service between suburban communities.

Federal money is also being used to help fund Lake County's new Traffic Management Center in Libertyville, scheduled to open in July. The traffic center will use a high-tech, fiber-optic cables and cameras to better control and coordinate major traffic signals in the county.

Regarding train whistles, Kirk said he supports allowing communities to continue "quiet zones" to reduce the noise of whistle blowing and transferring control for regulating rail crossing safety from the Federal Railroad Administration to the Illinois Department of Transportation.

"Our initial goal is to make sure IDOT recognizes current community quiet zones, particularly at (crossings) that have never had an accident," he said.

Palatine Mayor Rita Mullins said train whistle noise is a big problem for the communities in her area, saying there are about nine rail crossings in a 1.5-mile stretch.

"It impacts not only the residents but the businesses along there," she said.

Kirk also discussed the high price of gasoline. Kirk said he supports changes in regulations that would end local gas monopolies and provide for a single clean-burning gasoline, as well as continuing tax credits for hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.